

Unique People

UP



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Intelligent perspectives for business leaders
Issue 8

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diversity is crucial
for business

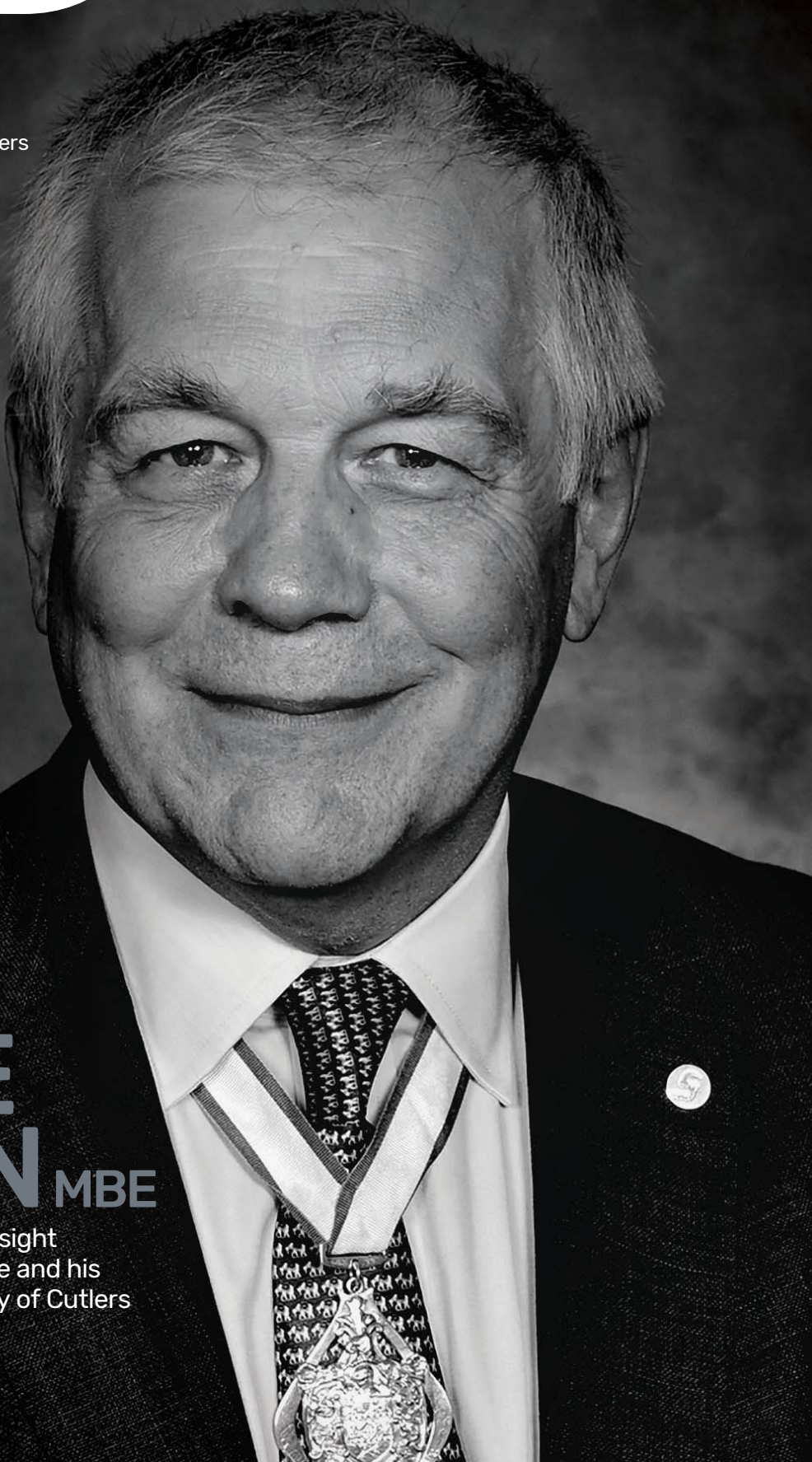
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ebuyer.com



with **Mat Grey**
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OSL Group Holdings Ltd.

GEORGE KILBURN MBE

George Kilburn MBE gives us an insight
into his fascinating military service and his
transition to Clerk to The Company of Cutlers



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Welcome to the Winter Newsletter

Hello and welcome to the latest edition of Unique People magazine. As we head towards the end of Q1, it's worth reflecting on some of the developments during the concluding months of 2019 and the extraordinary difference just a couple of months can make.

The trials and tribulations of the political landscape dominated the media in the latter part of 2019 as the conclusion of the General Election resulted in an overwhelming Conservative majority meaning that Brexit may indeed 'get done' (however that may be). It would be fair to suggest, irrespective of how people voted, that the result went a long way towards relieving the level of uncertainty many felt before the results were out.

Since then, we have of course, seen the rise of Coronavirus, which has replaced Brexit as the dominant focus of the media and only time will tell the full impact, both socially and economically.

We'll be talking to Mat Grey, Group Managing Director at OSL Holdings, whose early beginnings working in the family business laid the foundations for his impressive career that has almost led him full circle.

Mat delves into some of the difficulties facing many manufacturing firms in the Yorkshire region and highlights the key characteristics and attributes that he feels makes a good leader.

Finally, we talk to George Kilburn, who will be discussing his 10 years service as Clerk to The Company of Cutlers in Hallamshire. We'll be looking at the role The Company of Cutlers plays in its

We'll also be looking at diversity in the workplace and how businesses perform better when they have greater ethnic and gender diversity.

One thing is for sure at this stage, businesses can expect some sort of disruption as they gear up to cope with the outbreak. The recent Budget saw Chancellor, Rishi Sunak, unveil an number of packages to help boost the NHS and businesses and we can only hope that the threat is temporary and can be contained as we endeavour to forge ahead in such uncertain times.

In this issue, we will delve into some of the key trends and hot topics facing organisations in the current climate, one of these being 'Tackling the talent shortage' and the importance of having a strategy to, not only attract, but retain the best people for your organisation as the candidate-led market continues unabated.

We'll also be looking at diversity in the workplace and how businesses perform better when they have greater ethnic and gender diversity.

local region and how George's military experience helped shape him to take on, and deliver in such a varied, demanding and fascinating leadership position, which is steeped in history.

As always, I hope you find this edition of Unique People of interest to you. We would be delighted to hear from you should you have any recommendations for future issues, so please don't hesitate to get in touch with any feedback or suggestions you may have.

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LinkedIn with Nigel Brewster

Current talent trends

Employee-led learning



As more and more employees are pushing for professional autonomy, we can expect to see organisations move away from top-down development frameworks and begin encouraging employees to drive their own learning and progress.

Empowering Management

Empowering leadership and management is an area we can expect to be embodied by many organisations in the coming years. More organisations are working to create an environment in which a managers personnel can feel empowered enough to make decisions, take measured personal and professional risks and ultimately gain a sense of autonomy enough to develop new performance solutions. It is thought that a progression towards a more empowered workforce will improve staff retention rates and contribute to more forward-thinking and developmental working.

Future-proofing job roles

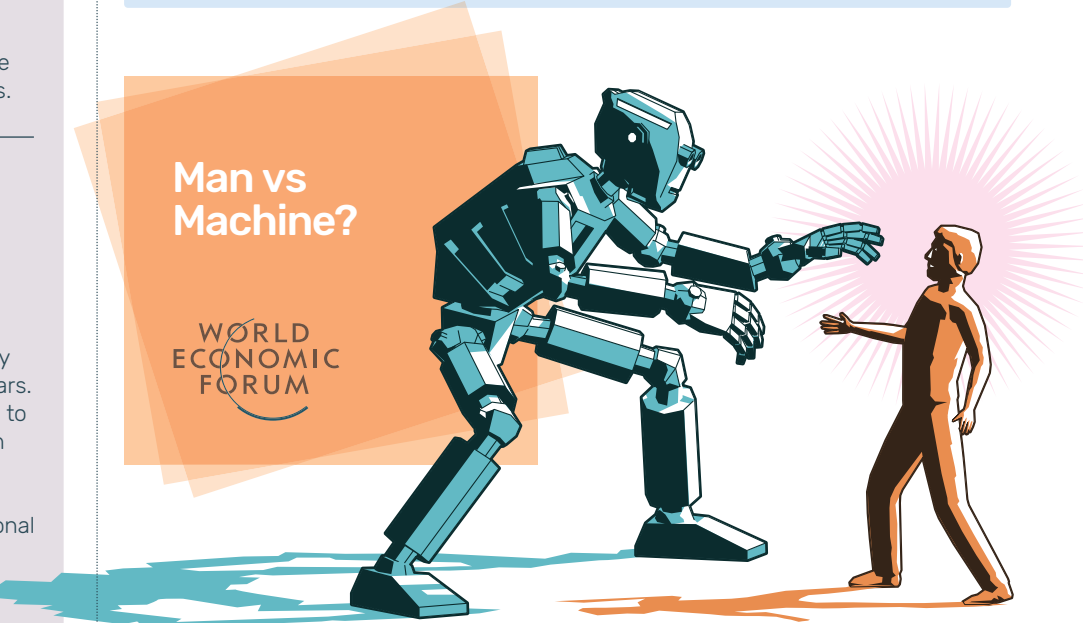
Whatever the industry or sector, organisations are beginning to accept and embrace the fact that things are changing. Automation and technology use continues to rise, and if businesses fail to adapt and keep up, they'll fall behind.

Throughout 2020 we can expect to see job roles restructured and redesigned to best prepare employees to embrace change and adapt alongside the introduction of different skills and working methods.



Man vs Machine?

WORLD ECONOMIC FORUM



As the division of labour between AI, humans and technology continues to develop, organisation leaders need to be thinking about how they can create inclusive workplaces that satisfy business productivity whilst ensuring humans still have a role to play.

There's a growing fear that technology is removing the need for a human workforce and the World Economic Forum predicts that by 2025 the average workplace will comprise of 48% human work and 52% machines or technology.

Employee experience

The 2020 LinkedIn Global Talent Trends report showed that a whopping 96% of UK business leaders deem employee experience to be pivotal to their company's success. Creating an exceptional employee experience not only serves to improve retention rates, but it also has a lasting impact on productivity and overall business success. **Happy employees = happy clients and customers, right?**

LinkedIn



Workplace diversity is invaluable



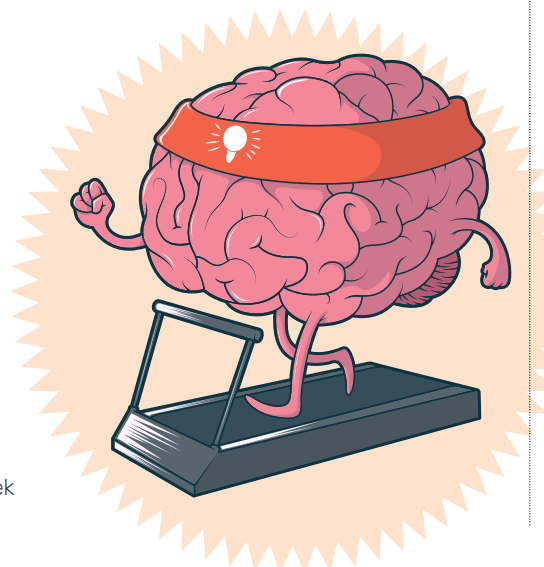
It is overwhelmingly understood that diversity in the workplace can have a significant impact on success. Age diversity in particular can prove pivotal in ensuring that certain skill-sets are shared and employees can learn from one another. According to a report produced by Deloitte, when employees 'think their organisation is committed to, and supportive of, diversity and they feel included', their ability to innovate increases by a whopping 83%.

Deloitte

Employee reskilling

A key area of focus for many organisations will be the reskilling of existing employees. In another bid to ensure they are prepared for the future, there will be a real focus on sharpening up both hard skills, such as data programming, and soft skills like organisational and behavioural awareness.

Reskilling is not only an aim for talent-leaders, it's shared with employees also. The fear of missing out on roles and opportunities due to gaps in skill is encouraging employees to actively seek personal development and training.



People analytics

The world of HR and recruitment in recent years has seen an increase in the use of people analytics to make hiring and work flow management decisions. But how does it work?

People analytics involves the use of data to measure and improve HR and hiring operations. It is being used by organisations to help identify flight risks, strategically plan organisation structure and track hiring performance.

A recent LinkedIn talent solutions study suggested that the most common areas currently measured by businesses are day-to-day employee performance, workforce planning and the evaluation of recruitment channels to manage staff retention.

Although we've only really seen this being utilised by a small portion of elite organisations, we can expect to see this become a priority for many SME's in the coming years.

Business strategy buy-in

Gone are the days where employees would turn up, do what's asked and go home with no questions asked about why they do what they do. For employees nowadays, there is a strong desire to understand and embrace the overall purpose and long-term strategy and ambitions of the organisation they work for.

Through 2020 and beyond, we can expect to see a growth of purpose-driven leadership and talent leaders encouraging their employees to embody and 'buy-in' to the organisations aspirations.



with Mat Grey

Mat Grey is Group MD at his family business, OSL Group Holdings Ltd., a diverse, privately owned manufacturing group which supplies the automotive after-market, rail and security industries. In this insightful interview, Mat delves into some of the difficulties facing many manufacturing firms in the Yorkshire region and highlights the key characteristics and attributes that he feels makes a good leader.

Q Could you please talk us through your career to date and how you reached your current position as Managing Director?

A My ambition from school was to be in a corporate environment in a leadership capacity. I was open to the idea of working for someone else, or for myself, but my main priority was to be in a fast-moving environment where I had exposure to complex dynamics and real accountability. I found it intellectually stimulating and stretching and wanted to learn from the best.

I spent my childhood growing up within the family business watching it develop, go through difficult times, change and then grow again and had become fascinated with the world of business. A career within the family business for me, was an option but not a passage of rights and so, I felt I should take the opportunity to expand my exposure and experience into something different. This led me to join Lloyds Banking Group after university on their Graduate Leadership program. This was a 2-year program designed to expose post-graduates to a mix of core competencies in order to fast track us through the organisation into positions of seniority. After the scheme finished, I gravitated towards business turnaround and worked on the Irish property portfolio. This meant me spending most weeks in Dublin working with clients that, in some cases, were in real financial difficulty.

The exposure I gained through my time working within the banking sector was incredible. I learned vast amounts, with the biggest lesson being that I did not want to work for a bank. I found the bureaucracy stifling and my skill set was not well suited to working within such strict governance. My time in a turnaround environment solidified my view that this was a space I wanted to work in. It felt like you were saving something and I was good at it. I noticed that a lot of businesses died, or didn't perform to their market potential because they were misunderstood and therefore run poorly, or/and under invested.

The opportunity to move back into the family group came along by chance when the export sales of one of the divisions was decimated with 80% of the team leaving over a 1-month period. After considering my options, I felt it was a challenge that would give me further turnaround experience with greater free reign to take control of a business unit. I dropped into an environment with very little structure, zero training and no plan. I remember my first week coincided with a conference where I was meeting all of our major export customers and literally pointing at our catalogues and asking if they bought varying products from us currently.

Continues overleaf →



with Mat Grey

Needless to say, I was pretty raw. It got better from there thankfully, and over the next three years we developed a driven team, developed a 'go to market' plan and successfully grew the business.

Three years later, one of the other businesses within the family group that, would become OSL Cutting Technologies, had a vacancy in an MD position. This meant moving back to my hometown of Sheffield in 2014 and managing a team of 16, which was turning over £4m at the time. Again, the business had little structure or induction process in the market/business.

In the first week, there was a new system being implemented and after about the third day, we started getting panicked phone calls from warehouse staff, customers and suppliers as we realised that big chunks of process and data has been missed. Cue me, pointing at things, asking what they were and trying to come up with a reasonable solution as anarchy descended.

What I realised quite quickly was that

We made our first acquisition in late 2015 taking us into being a manufacturer, doubling our turnover, expanding our product lines by seven and taking us to 65 staff. The business we acquired was losing money at the time, so the first job was to turnaround the financial position. This meant integrating the businesses quickly, reducing cost and driving volume through the factory. This took a year. I had never run a manufacturing unit and it was a baptism of fire. I had always been able to accurately predict cost, monitor my working capital and predict, within a few percent, what my P&L would look like before it was issued. That changed as we sunk our teeth into running a manufacturer. We then set about figuring out how to move warehouses, integrate systems, and manage international branches. It was all another steep learning curve.

During this time, we started to develop our management team and invest heavily into our system infrastructure. We added a second acquisition at the end of 2017 building our manufacturing portfolio further and then completed on our largest

We have grown to £18m as a division and to a 125 headcount with salaried staff on three continents.

the business has a fantastic team but was completely data starved. We knew very little about the environment in which we operated. We didn't know what made our market tick. Who were our customers? What did they want? Who were we competing with? What should our strategy be? For the next three to six months we built all of our data streams, visiting everyone we could get our hands on, and figuring out what our strategy needed to be. It became clear that we needed to grow our product and core competency profile. At the time we sold two core products and had no manufacturing capabilities, narrowing our ability to attack the market. It was time for an acquisition.

acquisition in January 2019. We have grown to £18m as a division and to a 125 headcount with salaried staff on three continents. The business has become a lot more complicated to manage but, lots more fun. We can invest into our people in ways we never could previously and can attract and retain greater talent. We are also able to service our customers more efficiently and effectively.

In late 2018, Chris Heaton, one of my mentors and close personal friends retired as Group MD from OSL Group. I took responsibility for the group which comprises of four divisions. I maintain responsibility for OSL Cutting Technologies, although my senior team is allowing me to focus on supporting the other divisions.

Q When you took over as MD for the family business, did you feel it was an easy transition for the organisation, or were you met with some challenges?

A There are always challenges for anyone coming into a new role, be that family or otherwise. I am naturally an assertive character, and that has given rise to conflict scenarios throughout my career. Honestly, I found that in 'corporate', it was more of a challenge for me than in the family organisation due to the increased levels of political factors and the constantly evolving 'game of thrones'.

Having said that, there was conflict with me entering the family organisation. There is always an assumption that I would not work hard or reflect the same values as the people I was working with. Quickly these assumptions drop away when you set the right example which I have always tried to do. Every move you make as the owner's son rightly gets scrutinised in far greater detail than others. It is important to recognise and maintain the responsibility you hold to the family name when working within the company.

One of the key challenges I have found is creating an environment where people feel comfortable to disagree with me and voice their opinion. There is always an element of fear around the 'Boss's' son. Recruiting strong personalities has been important, learning to listen rather than bulldozing the room more so. It was certainly difficult for my senior managers. They found themselves trying to manage an ambitious, group director/shareholder whilst trying to retaining control of their division and strategic direction. It was an odd balance at times and I know I didn't always make it easy.

I was lucky in that I came from a humble family. My mother was a midwife and my father was self-made. There wasn't, and isn't, much space for being spoilt. My father being who he was, had built an organisation that rewarded based on merit and had very little politics.

Q What would you say are your main ambitions for OSL, and how will you navigate these changes with the Board and employees alike?

A My primary ambition for OSL is to turn it into a platform that attracts and develops the best people. We have, and will continue to invest heavily into all aspects of the organisation to make it a place that people want to work. I have never been overly motivated by money, I am passionate however, about my belief in the power of bringing talented, honest, hard-working people together and unifying them behind a common cause. Core to that for us is self-development. We have developed a recruitment process that identifies people who want to better themselves at their core.

other facilities in the business. We are developing training programs for all levels of the organisation with the ambition of creating as fluid an 'upward' or 'sideways' trajectory as possible.

OSL has developed a methodology over the last 5-years for buying, integrating and running businesses. We have really been developing a framework for how we feel it should be done. This is a constant process of development, but we believe it is at a point where we can start to roll this model out. We have been creeping into consultancy and looking at other horizontal moves, but it is early days

The vision I outline is not just mine, but a representation of the organisation I work for.

Increasingly I walk around the organisation and feel pride in the fact that we have so many of our team that have risen to senior roles over the years and that we have been able to attract 'top people' to the business. We know we are only scratching the surface of what we can achieve and want to grow our platform over the coming years. We are investing into new offices and warehousing which will give us a brand-new state-of-the-art home for the coming years. We have just built a gym and are going through a phase of investment to improve several

and as we sit today, we are squarely rooted in manufacturing.

The key people to take on this journey are the team. The vision I outline is not just mine, but a representation of the organisation I work for. We are working hard to bring everyone into that vision and asking everyone what direction we should head. We are a big believer in culture and its importance in running a business and we are, and will be, investing heavily here. All of this is done within a framework of financial and strategic oversight, but the delivery is down to everyone in the business.

Q What do you think are the main difficulties facing manufacturing firms in Yorkshire?

A There seems to be a large amount of small to medium sized businesses stuck at a threshold of growth in Yorkshire. It takes significant momentum to break through certain boundaries of growth, £0-1 million is probably the toughest, £1-5m is a jump. Getting over the £10m is a big change and then I see a further bracket at around the £40m-£50m that seems very tough. From my observation, and it may be an inaccurate one, there seems to be a lot of businesses stagnant within the £1-£10m bracket that lack the financial backing, organisational experience or strategic vision to drive them forward. I think this causes a scalability issue in the region which leads to a lack of local investment and multiplier effect.

A senior business leader said to me the other day that unlike London, Yorkshire is constantly in a state of recession and has a mentality of fighting to survive. Although this is clearly a generalisation it does feel that the confidence of manufacturers in the region is brittle. Some of our high-profile businesses have gone bankrupt or have needed repeated financial support. As a manufacturing region we have moved backwards in the world through the years and this decline has only relatively recently started to reverse. These things impact confidence which is a critical factor in risk taking and progress. A clear vision and strategy for the region is important in supporting our business community to take the necessary steps to drive onward.



The OSL Group of Companies comprises a number of well known and world class brands



Q What would you say are the key attributes of a successful leader and how easy would you say it is to adhere to these?

A In my opinion, the core attributes of a leader are integrity, empathy and bravery. They underpin all other attributes like intelligence, work ethic, communication skills etc. The leader sets the tone of the whole organisation. They exude the core values of the business and then decide who the senior team is that represents those values. Integrity is vital as it means sticking to your core values even when the environment is asking you not too. This happens often. Regularly the business must balance a range of stakeholder's priorities. Sticking to your core values ensures that one of those stakeholders is not unfairly

advantaged over another. Empathy allows you to understand and connect with the myriad of people that you come across in business, whether as employees, customers or suppliers. Empathy allows you to understand behaviours and build communication channels in order to ensure people have the best opportunity to make the right decisions. It takes bravery to be empathetic and to show integrity. It is easier and safer to sit and complain about someone or something than show empathy to it and face up to the fact that you may be wrong. It takes bravery to challenge someone when you see something happening that is wrong.

Without the core attributes all other attributes are a waste of time. They won't be used correctly.

How easy is it? A constant daily battle that you will never entirely win. We are all fallible, we all have bad days, hours, minutes. The challenge is to improve, develop and grow into the role as you learn more about yourself and the requirements of the landscape. Leadership is the second greatest challenge and honour I have experienced in my life behind raising my son and, after ten years in leadership roles and two as a dad, I still feel like a novice at both. I think that will always be the case!

Q How do you think organisations like OSL can contribute to narrowing the ever-growing skills gap within Engineering and Manufacturing?

A OSL is of a size now where we can invest into structured programs that develop the skills for its future. Most companies want to have the type of programs that develop talent but lack the resource to dedicate enough time to it. The senior management team now has enough bandwidth and the remit to focus on development programs. My Executive Assistant has experience in HR and is focussing some of her time to developing these programs alongside senior management. In time, we will in-house HR to bring greater focus to these types of programs. It is something we wish to build a core-competency around as it is vital to our long-term success.

Companies have a combined responsibility to provide the vision for government as to where investment should go regarding the development of skills. We should understand the direction of our industry and be able to feed that vision backwards. Ultimately, the businesses in Engineering and Manufacturing need to make the industry attractive to talent.

For that to be the case, the businesses need to be progressive, growing and offering challenges that other industries cannot – that is what young people are attracted to. The organisations themselves need to offer more than just a place to work and a descent package, but a vision for the future and a culture that promotes development. We have to change the feel of manufacturing away from its traditional routes and more towards environments that attract talent. We should look at the most sought-after industries and ask ourselves, "What do they have that we don't?" If you take digital as an example, the key differential is not the product in my opinion, it is the management teams. They are younger and more progressive.

Ultimately when recruiting, your business is your product. If you cannot sell your product to your client, then there is a problem with the product and it needs to change. We as owners and directors need to understand what it is that attracts the best talent and then engineer our businesses to offer that.



The OSL Group is a British owned conglomerate of successful manufacturing companies.

Our size and shape has changed over the years but our focus on customer satisfaction, growth and market leadership hasn't.

We create and invest in opportunities. The group has grown through acquisitions and we pride ourselves in successful integration.

Our businesses support and supply the engineering, rail, automotive and security industries. We invest in our products and in our people to bring the best quality technical expertise to these markets.



Q You have worked your way to a senior position quite early on in your career, can you tell us a bit about the challenges you have faced as a young MD?

A Lack of experience. I was very lucky in that I had a lot of exposure to a variety of corporate experiences growing up. I had the privilege of being sat in board meetings at the age of 12, travelling supply chains, getting exposure to how markets worked to cleaning skips and paint tanks out. I'm pretty sure that the management team at times literally made up terrible

I would dive into situations and points of view without always taking the time to assess all the variables or listen and engage with all of the key stakeholders. I didn't always take the time to develop and execute the correct strategy. I have to admit that this is still the case but my mistakes and failures have taught me to adapt quickly and learn a lot.

the standing of senior members of a business. It's sloppy thinking. Looking back though, I am very glad to have been exposed to this type of stereotyping. It taught me how to position myself so that I was unignorable. It also taught me not to repeat history. I actively listen to the younger generations in our business.

Honestly, I saw the stereotyping both inside and outside the organisation as a huge opportunity. When people have a set of expectations born around assumptions, then you have them in a position of weakness. They expect one thing and when they receive another, they often don't have time to react. My age would allow my competitors to feel safe and open up to me in ways they otherwise wouldn't. Ultimately, I was underestimated in most interactions, which is where I prefer to be.

When people have a set of expectations born around assumptions, then you have them in a position of weakness

jobs up that 'needed doing' to keep me grounded. Or maybe they just didn't like me, either way I'm grateful they did it. All of this gave me an opportunity to get greater exposure than your average 15-30 year old. I think early in my career I was too prone to action rather than thought.

Understanding how to influence without the benefit of 30 years' experience was an interesting challenge. At times, I had a valid point of view but was judged to be too inexperienced to add value. Prejudice to the younger members of a team is easy and reinforces

Q What would be your words of advice for young executives aspiring to achieve the top jobs?

A Firstly, ask yourself, "Why do you want the job?" I see a lot of people chasing promotion for the sake of promotion. They may lack the desire, capability or suitability to do the job they are chasing but will pursue it through blind ambition or need for external gratification. Why do you want to work in that type of environment? Do you even know what that environment looks like or what it takes to be successful? Are you good enough to be there? It's important to be congruent with yourself and really align your passions to the career you pursue.

To take a top job, you need to be a professional. That title is thrown around a lot in business, but I view it in the same way that I view professional sport. There are professionals and there are amateurs. There are the top performing professionals and the lower league players. If you want a top job, you must be able to compete with the best. I learn a lot watching people I consider to be the most talented within industry. I listen to content

created by Gary Vaynerchuk, Ray Dalio, Aubrey Marcus, Richard Branson, Malcolm Gladwell.

Go wide, as well as deep. The modern executive is operating in an environment of greater connectivity, both within their organisation and outside. That requires a broader understanding of the operating environment in order to add value. We are connecting our suppliers, customers, company functions and data streams into one common platform. That requires an understanding of all of the components and how they interact with each other.

If you want to specialise in an executive position, then make sure you are ahead of the curve when it comes to that specialism. If you are in marketing, how do you build a strategy and align activity underneath it? Know and engage with the best third parties to drive value when you can't in-house it. Identify the best market segmentation tools to classify your

competitors, customers, end users and deliver the best intel to your team. Go deep!

Get as close to the best as possible. Ring them up, offer to work for free, do whatever you have to do to learn from them. You will learn more from a professional at the top of her/his game in one month than you will next to an amateur in a lifetime. Track and monitor your progress. How much value are you adding? You will constantly have to sell yourself in the corporate world, people will forget the impact you have, and it will be your job to remind them. Keep a log of your successes and failures through the year and push yourself forward for that next role.

Get good with people. You will be managing and relying on lots of them and you are going to need them. They should like you; you should like them. Moreover look back to my answer on what makes a good leader – be brave, have empathy and act with integrity.

Tackling the talent shortage

SORRY
CANDIDATES ARE TEMPORARILY
OUT OF STOCK



The 'war on talent' continues to be an on-going problem across all sectors and nobody is immune to the shortages in talent that businesses are facing. The battle shouldn't be shied away from though, as there are plenty of ways to tackle the talent gap.

The low unemployment rate has made it harder for employers when it comes to hiring new talent as the vast number of eligible candidates are already employed.

The people with the right skills and would-be desirable candidates are likely to be comfortable where they are. So, when a candidate becomes open to a new



opportunity, the window is extremely small before a recruiter or other HR professional reaches out with a role.

This means that businesses need to develop an approach to filling the gap in their talent in an effective way that works for the candidate – and eventual employee – and the businesses' wider strategy.

Chris Alcock,
Non-Executive
Director,
Brewster Partners



Creating a connection

The shortage of talent has created a candidate-led market, and this puts talented candidates in a strong position. While companies want the best talent more than ever before, the best talent equally wants more than ever before.

Building an employer brand is key to attracting talent. This remains a key focus for organisations as they recognise that very few people join companies that they don't have a connection to, particularly graduates.

Graduates are switched on to social media and digital marketing, so when they look to the job market, they're likely to be looking to what they already know. So, it's essential that businesses create touch points – online and in the press – so, when a potential candidate (graduate or otherwise) is open to opportunities, they already know of your business.

Companies need to listen to what employees now expect, and sell themselves in equal measure. By creating an excellent company culture that encourages personal and professional growth, your company will be the workplace of choice.

Promoting individuality

Attracting talent is one thing, but retaining it is another thing entirely. One area to focus on is promoting individuality. Being a company that promotes equality and diversity is increasingly important.

When hiring from a pool of new, external candidates, it's crucial that employers are hiring a diverse range of people and promote equality from recruitment stage, all the way through to employees who have been at the company for many years. A diverse, multi-generational team is essential for any company, from different talents and experiences to points of view and approach.

Grow your talent

While it's important to continue to look for talent from the wider market, a simple way to tackle the talent shortage is by growing talent internally. Career development is highly sought after for new generations and more established professionals alike. While millennials are often driven and eager to climb the ladder quickly, Generation X has felt the impact of new generations entering the workforce and being promoted at

a quicker rate than them. Now is the time for companies to address these imbalances and ensure that talent within the company is being given equal opportunities for development if they want them.

Investing in talent and caring about your team is a sure-fire way to retain the best of the best. There are countless benefits that come from investing in your people. They're going to be delivering a better service to clients, they're likely to be happier, and of course, they're going to be more invested in your business.

Developing a company where people want to work is absolutely key to winning the war on talent. Taking a different approach to company culture will set you apart as you look to attract the very best talent.

Back to the future with **ebuyer.com**

From small beginnings in a Sheffield garage twenty years ago, online tech retailer Ebuyer.com has grown into a company with a turnover of over £200 million.

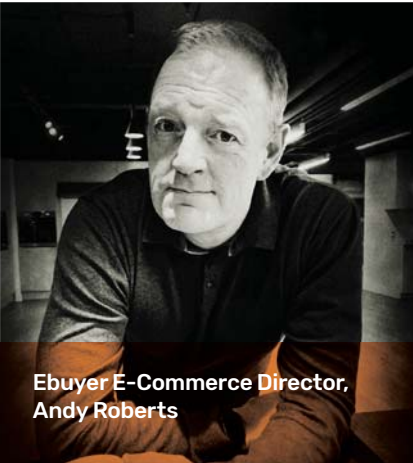
But, as tech continues to develop at a furious pace, it's the traditional standards of providing outstanding customer care which is helping Ebuyer.com expand its customer-base and look to the future with optimism.

A recent Which? survey

In the 2019 Which? online shopping survey, Ebuyer.com achieved an 82% approval rating. This placed it above Amazon, Apple, Currys/PC World and eBay. The survey was based on a combination of: value-for-money, product range, ease of ordering, deliveries and product quality.

Add to this research conducted by the review site REEV00, which reveals that 97% of customers would buy from Ebuyer again, and a pattern begins to emerge of a company which is bending over backwards to keep its customers happy – which is not always an easy task.

"Keeping customers happy is much more difficult than it seems," says Ebuyer, E-Commerce Director, Andy Roberts. "But we're working exceptionally hard to improve the company in all areas. For example, we're working closely with our partners to enhance our delivery



Ebuyer E-Commerce Director,
Andy Roberts

service which features: a two-hour window and a text message prior to delivery. We also have a priority service for business customers which includes next-day delivery during business hours.

"We currently have well-over five million registered customers," continues Andy, "but the key part is getting them to re-engage with us as regularly as possible. We do this through a combination of creative marketing, combined with exclusive offers and having the right products at the best price."



Continues overleaf →

"We currently have well-over five million registered customers, but the key part is getting them to re-engage with us as regularly as possible".

Ebuyer E-Commerce Director,
Andy Roberts



Back to the future with ebuyer.com (continued)



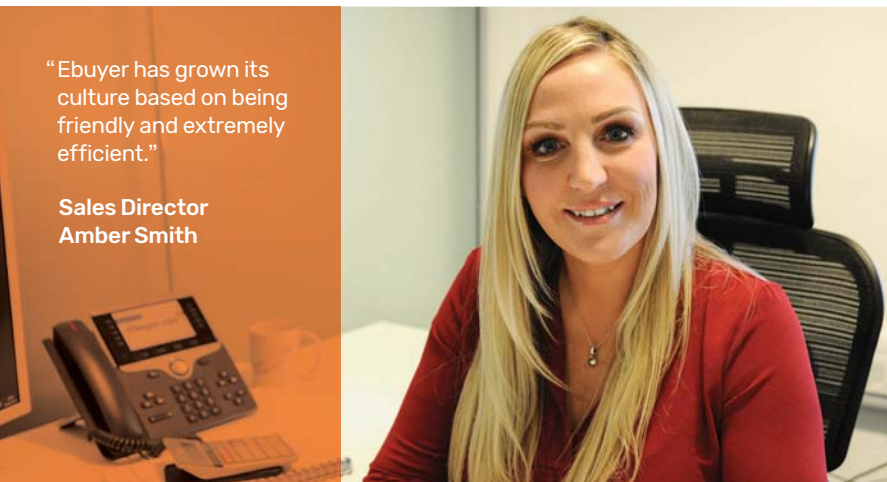
The really important bit

Ebuyer provides all manner of tech; laptops, desktops, printers, software, storage, networking solutions and office security, to name a few. "But no matter what products people buy, customer support and after-sales service has become increasingly important," continues Andy, who joined Ebuyer back in 2005 after working in Management Information for medical supply company B. Braun.

Ebuyer Sales Director, Amber Smith, says that Ebuyer has grown its culture based

on being friendly and extremely efficient. "There are no overseas call centres, no hours spent on hold and no cold attitudes. We treat people how we'd like to be treated ourselves."

Amber joined Ebuyer as Sales Executive in 2007 and, after five years became Sales Manager for B2B. She was promoted to Sales Director in 2017. "In a large company like Ebuyer, it's really important to get quality staff and provide the necessary training to make them outstanding."



"Ebuyer has grown its culture based on being friendly and extremely efficient."

Sales Director
Amber Smith

Moving forward

2019 saw the introduction of the Ebuyer Xenta range (of computer monitors and accessories), and the launch of the in-house PC building team. Lee Weymouth, who joined Ebuyer in 2004 and has worked his way up to be Commercial Director says, "Despite no official launch, advertising or promotional activity so far, they're selling really well, so we're very excited about the possibilities over the next twelve months. All products are made in the UK, utilising a highly-skilled workforce."

The gaming area was once again a huge area of growth for Ebuyer in 2019. It has increased its use of key influencers, utilised live streaming and formed outstanding partnerships with leading gaming brands.

Other new projects in the pipeline include the move in to Cloud storage, a new range of office furniture and Smart home products.

2020 news

January has already seen the launch of the new, in-house Content and PR team. E-Commerce Director, Andy Roberts, says, "As a fully-fledged creative agency, our new Content and PR team will produce bespoke marketing campaigns to help promote our own and vendor brands and businesses. The team includes specialists in animation, superior graphics, photography, journalism and copywriting.

"The in-house team provides everything needed to promote a product or brand externally. This includes great content and assets for our customers to use on their websites or for Ebuyer's own external marketing.

"New for 2020 is the launch of Ebuyer office furniture and we have already begun talks with corporate CCTV manufacturers to broaden the business security range."



"The Consumer Electronics Show (CES) often provides a barometer to consumer trends and there certainly seems to be no slow down when it comes to people wanting the latest model of their favourite phone or laptop."

Commercial Director
Lee Weymouth

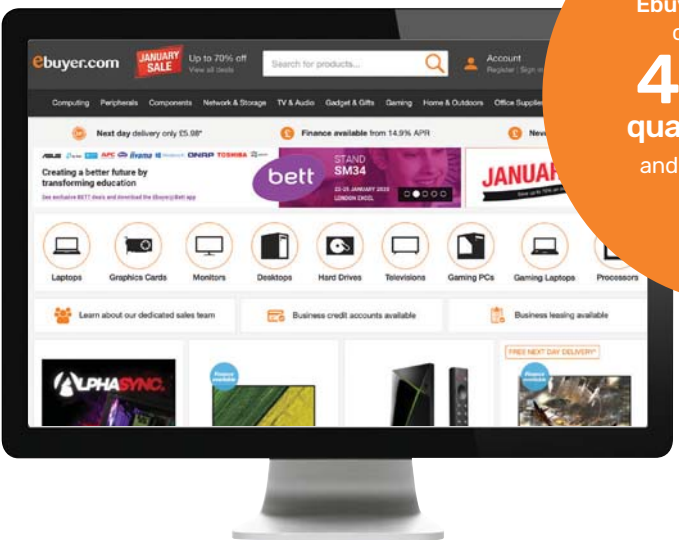
The future

Led by Commercial Director, Lee Weymouth, a delegation from Ebuyer attended the annual Consumer Electronics Show (CES) in Las Vegas, in January 2020. The annual tech event is used by manufacturers to showcase their latest products, many of which will find a place on the virtual shelves at Ebuyer.com.

Speaking on his return from the event, Lee said: "The scale of the show is staggering and every year there are

new innovations. From our point-of-view, the new smart-phones with their dual screens are an exciting concept and one which I'm sure will appeal to consumers.

"CES often provides a barometer to consumer trends and there certainly seems to be no slow down when it comes to people wanting the latest model of their favourite phone or laptop."



Ebuyer.com offer their customers over
40,000
quality products,
and this list is growing every day.



ebuyer.com

The facts

- 240 staff
- 5.3 million registered customers
- 100 million visits to Ebuyer.com per year
- 40,000 products on the website
- Over 1,000 different brands
- 2 million orders processed every year
- 93% of orders delivered on time and in good order
- 280,000 sq foot distribution centre containing more than 4 miles of conveyor belts
- Accredited partners with major brands including Microsoft, HP and Dell
- Over 150 PCs per day, built by in-house team
- Over 400,00 active B2B accounts
- 81.62% of B2B customers have between 1-50 staff
- Revenue expected to top £220million in 2020

Why workplace diversity is crucial for business

In today's workplace, being an organisation that employs a diverse range of people is an absolute must. Gone are the days when diversity was simply a banner some companies would display in an attempt to show they were committed to hiring people from all different walks of life.



Now, hiring a diverse group of employees is not only crucial from an equality and moral perspective, it can be pivotal to a company's strength and survival.

One of the most important benefits of having a diverse group of employees is that you'll have a range of people who have differing points of view and life experiences that back these up. For example, someone who is 55 and has decades of experience in your industry may bring different ideas to the table than someone who's in their early twenties and fresh out of university. This doesn't mean

either viewpoint is better or worse than the other, they're just different and both can be equally as valid.

Having a diverse team can add a different dynamic to team meetings and strategic discussions, as varied outlooks and experience levels can lead to healthy debate and more thorough problem solving. You might just find a member of your team comes to you with a completely different viewpoint than your own and presents an idea for development that you'd never otherwise have thought of.

One of the biggest things preventing talent leaders from actively implementing diversity is a fear that disagreements will hamper productivity. Statistically speaking however, organisations who are less diverse (in both gender and ethnic terms) are 29%* more likely to be less profitable.

People from different backgrounds also bring with them their own unique set of skills that can be useful for your organisation. Some employees may be strong in some areas where others are not and vice versa.



Statistically speaking, organisations who are less diverse (in both gender and ethnic terms) are

29%*
more likely to be
less profitable

*Source: Delivering through Diversity,
a report by
McKinsey & Company



Someone who is 55 and has decades of experience in your industry may bring different ideas to the table than someone who's in their early twenties and fresh out of university.

But, together, they cover a whole range of skills and knowledge groups that make for a stronger team and therefore business because of this.

Diversity within an organisation can be incredibly important for business reputation. Business reputation will only become more positive when

organisations demonstrate their commitment to diversity through clear outreach and recruitment. A business that is well-known for having a diverse workforce and being a great place to work will attract top-talent and improve retention rates which will undeniably make your organisation stronger.

One important thing to remember is that no matter how committed your organisation is to hiring candidates from diverse backgrounds, you must also make sure that once they get the job, the workplace environment is conducive to them thriving in their role. Ensure that everyone's viewpoint is respected and considered and that every single team member feels valued. This will set up a workplace culture where everyone is happy to give their opinion and knows that they'll never be dismissed in discussion. This is the best environment to future-proof your organisation, grow in strength and succeed long-term.



with George Kilburn MBE

Colonel George Kilburn MBE gives us an insight into his fascinating military service and his transition from the armed services to life in a civilian role as he enters his 10th year as Clerk to the Cutlers' Company in Sheffield, an organisation which dates back to 1624 and represents the interests of manufacturing firms across South Yorkshire.

Q Pre-Cutlers, you had a fascinating and lengthy military career, can you tell us a bit about that?

A I'll start with my father. He left school at 14 and 4 years later went to war, returning at 24. On his return he realised he was going to struggle because of his lack of education. He spent the next 14 years at night school to help develop his career and because he didn't want his children to struggle as he did, he sent us away to school.

I went at Trent College and after that my future was set; I was going to go into the family building business and become Managing Director and my father would become Chairman. Before this, I went into the army. He allowed me three years so I could go and get it out of my system in the same way he had done.

Sadly, 18 months in, he died. At the time I was still engaged in the military and by the time I was eligible to come out, my older brother had stepped in to run the business. I was enjoying myself and stayed where I was.

Having got through Sandhurst, I joined The Duke of Wellington's Regiment, which was the infantry regiment for this part of the world. As a local regiment, it was full of Yorkshire folk; including Sheffield lads, Barnsley lads and a few from Doncaster. I'm from a little town called Mirfield between Wakefield and Huddersfield. They were my people and therefore I just had a ball.

I started in Northern Ireland. At 19 years of age I was commanding an independent

platoon in an isolated location. Essentially barely trained, but I had a platoon Sergeant who was just superb and he was the Apprentice Meister. The main difference was that I was a boss, but he knew what was going on. So he just kept me straight with advice or a simple "don't do that again, sir".

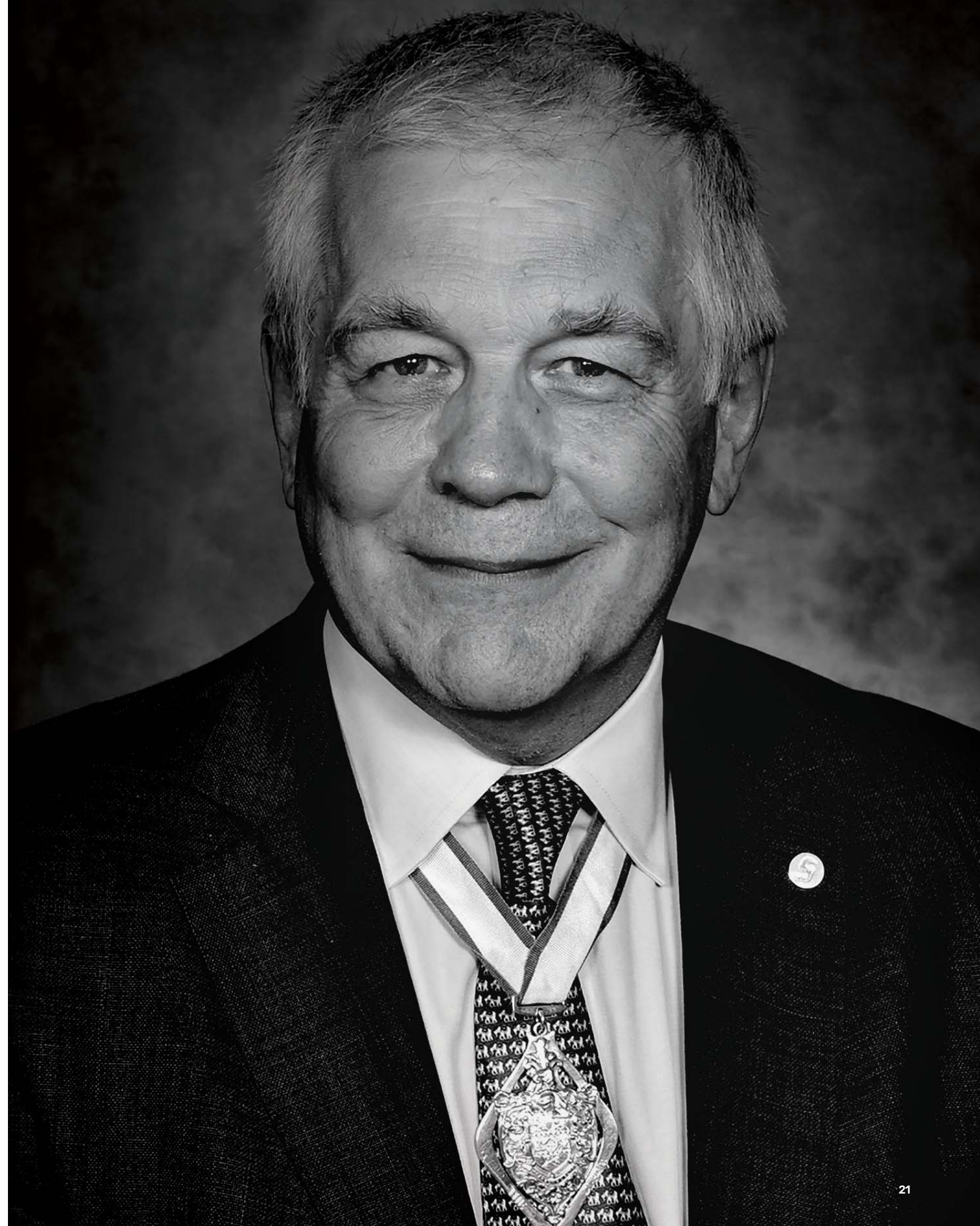
I had a stint in Cyprus for the United Nations and then I moved back to York to become a Training Platoon Commander. This was followed by a few years in Germany with a couple of trips to Canada. I applied for a job in Barbados, however, my Commanding Officer didn't want me to go and wrote to tell the postings people I'd rather go on an operational tour of Northern Ireland.

I moved to Northern Ireland and had a cracking tour. It's always dangerous, but there's real purpose and excitement. From there, we came back to the UK and then to Gibraltar. After a year there, I went to the School of Infantry and Warminster where I was an instructor for platoon commanders.

I was soon back in Northern Ireland as a Company Commander in charge of 100 men. One of my soldiers was seriously injured whilst I was there and I'd already had a soldier killed

under my command, but risk is part of the job. My generally aggressive stance, by and large, kept casualties down and even the seriously injured soldier was under somebody else's command. At the time, political correctness ruled and none of my people would have fired their weapon in anger when I arrived because they were convinced that if they did, they'd go to jail. By the time I was finished, they were happy to do so. In fact, on one occasion someone was shooting outside the barracks in a place called Woodburn. I went out to investigate and the gunman was still around. As soon as I got out, the gunman fired at our position and the round missed me by several feet. I went to the ground, as you do and as soon as I got up and was going forward, the lad from behind me identified the gunman and fired, missing me by a couple of inches.

I then became the Principle Staff Officer at the NORTHAG Air Mobile Division. Sir Michael Rose ran the division and it was fantastic to be given guidance and trusted to get on with it. By the time we finished, we had developed a Multinational Airmobile Division (10,000 people), the first one to be a computerised division in the UK. I got an MBE out of it and he eventually became a four-star general.





with George Kilburn MBE (continued)

I then went to French Staff College because I quite fancied doing something that was a bit different. After two years of studying, I joined the intelligence branch of the Rapid Reaction Corps (50,000 people).

Around 18 months after I arrived there, we went away to Bosnia for a year to really sit on the situation after warfare had, in theory ceased. Working on intelligence was just fantastic. For a year all I had to do was think – bringing all the information I had available together to work out what the opposition were going to do.

I was then posted in the Falkland Islands. My wife made the comment, “Isn’t the army marvellous, they post you away for 12 months so I learn to do everything myself, then you come back and they send us somewhere I can’t get away from you!” – we discovered that we got on rather well. In the Falklands, I was the Financial,

that you’re careful and spending to best effect but if your principal function is to spend the money (and mine was then) it’s a different thing altogether.

I ended up taking proactive action and we spent our budget in my first year but I had bought ahead and I probably gave my successor a problem. My small business mentality kicked in: because I wasn’t prepared to waste money. I wasn’t just going to get money out the door. It had to be justified. If it wasn’t justified, we wouldn’t spend it.

After the Falklands I took command of 3 DWR in Sheffield which was soon amalgamated into the East and West Riding regiment with Companies in Barnsley/Sheffield, Huddersfield, Hull, York and Wakefield.

It was here that I had the most difficult time I can remember as I was tasked

I held a board meeting which considered every one of these senior NCO’s. We scored everybody in exactly the same way and we cut to 42. It was it was not a happy experience. Telling people who’ve been with the regiment for 25 and 30 years that they didn’t have a job was deeply unpleasant.

Military and Operational Planner and I was also the Land Component Commander. So, I had about 1,200 army soldiers under my command for 18 months.

I was responsible for planning the budget which was tiny by MOD standards; only eighty three million quid a year, but the fundamental difference, as I have discovered, between running a budget and running a business is this: With a budget you just have to spend the money, and with a business you’ve got to make it so you can spend it.

And there’s an awful lot of confusion in government circles because they think they’re good businessman because they’ve run a £4-5 billion pound budget. Actually, that’s nothing to do with business, you know, it’s very important

with turning three regiments into one. I had to reduce the number of senior NCO’s in my Battalion, and we had about 89. I think my allocation in the new regiment was going to be 42.

I held a board meeting which considered every one of these senior NCO’s. We scored everybody in exactly the same way and we cut to 42. It was not a happy experience. Telling people who’ve been with the regiment for 25 and 30 years that they didn’t have a job was deeply unpleasant.

I then went to the Democratic Republic of Congo. I had been a Commanding Officer, which means there were 650 people throwing themselves about to do my bidding. I then went to Congo where I worked for a Senegalese General where

I was his military assistant and he was the Force Commander. I’d gone from being this all important individual to what his staff described as the ‘generals little slave boy’. How the mighty had fallen, but what a cracking job – I travelled round the region with the General and I believe that we had an impact.

I then went to NATO Headquarters in Brussels in the Operations Branch, predominantly working on Kosovo and the Balkans, but also with some responsibility for Afghanistan. This was work at the grand strategic level, a new experience but great fun.

After NATO, I then went to Georgia in the Caucasus where I was commander of the UN sector. I had 54 officers under my command who were all observers and unarmed, and our protection was the Russians. On a number of occasions the Russians came to my aid.

I had a very good relationship with them because the first time we went I took a bottle of whiskey. At this point the Russians were badly paid, so a bottle of whiskey was a luxury. Thereafter, the chief of staff and I got on well and this was because he felt that I showed him the appropriate respect.

From there I went to New York, where I lived for a year working for the UN Force Generation service, mainly for Congo but working other areas as well. It was great fun; there is a degree of difficulty at the top end because all the nations wish to have their view taken into account. At NATO, I couldn’t sign anything because the bureaucracy just didn’t allow it. However in the UN, the only way to make it work was to keep everything down at a relatively low level. So, I had a great 12 months there.

In my last three years in the Army, I was the Liaison Officer with the central staffs in Paris; my office was on the Boulevard Saint Germain. When people really irritated me I would walk down the road and I’d look at the Place de la Concorde and the Eiffel Tower and think ‘it’s not as bad as all that’.



The Company of
Cutlers in Hallamshire
Since 1624

Q How did you feel when you were leaving the military and what did you think life was going to look like moving forward?

A Well, to be honest, I wanted to go back to Africa as it was exciting and so much in Africa is broken, which means you can achieve far more with far less. I was due to retire in March 2010 and in August of 2009 I went to the funeral of the wife of a friend of mine. He had worked abroad for the previous 15- 20 years. At the funeral he said to me, “Just be very careful, I left the Army at 42 and I worked abroad for 20 years”. The deal was that he would be away and his wife would keep the home going. He’d earn pots of money and then he’d come back

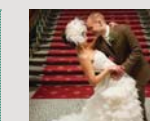
and they’d have a great life together from there on. Unfortunately, nine months after he returned she was dead and he could never take the time back. He warned me to think before I pushed off abroad.

It was actually at that funeral that I met Peter, my predecessor here. who said “I’m retiring in six months’ time, I think you’d do the job well and I’ll send you the information”. Sure enough, three months later he sent me the advert for the role and I put in an application and, as they say, the rest is history.

The Company of Cutlers comprises of the following:



The Cutlers’ Hall Preservation Trust
A Charitable organisation whose purpose it is to preserve the Hall, the silver collection, paintings, and artefacts.



Cutlers’ Hall Hospitality
The hospitality operation was brought in house by the Company in 2015 and is run very effectively by the current Chief Executive.

The Cutlers’ Company Charitable Trust

This comprises two funds and makes donations to support local charities and organisations. Its objectives are restricted to the Sheffield City Region and include the relief of poverty and deprivation as well as other more general charitable activity.



The Education Programme

The programme of Better Learners Better Workers has been highly successful over the last 7 years and it is currently in transition as the education landscape changes.



Q What was your experience of livery companies or knowledge of livery companies before this?

A I’d visited the Worshipful Company of Fletcher’s on a couple occasions when commanding my battalion. I’d had some contacts with them but nothing very serious. I’d been here to the Cutler’s Feast a couple of times, so I knew the Cutlers better than any other Livery company if I’m honest with you. I’d had very limited experience of them in general, however, what I’d seen of them reminded me of a super officers mess dinner sort of thing.



What I’d seen of the organisation and how it ran, was to an extent, familiar to me, particular with all the protocol. I was also attracted by the fact that it was linked to business and was again amongst my people in Yorkshire.

I had no depth of understanding of the 108 Companies there are in London, but I had enough of an understanding of what it was about, to be comfortable with it. I then came to realise, this job is the best in the world.

Q So you made a decision on the back of an epiphany and some advice, not to go to Africa. And livery companies weren’t alien to you as you applied and got the job. So on day one, what did you think?

A I was never certain that I was going to get the role because they weren’t looking for a mirror image of my predecessor, far from it.

They wanted somebody who could do things completely differently and, though I was different from my predecessor, I’m from a similar background but I clearly had the skill set they were looking for and here I am.

After I spent some weeks working alongside my predecessor, I became very comfortable with everything here. I’d run Endcliffe Hall at one point, so I’d run an historical building. I’ve had links to accounts, so I had experience in lots of different areas. The hospitality business at the time was not in-house, it was external overseeing which wasn’t too much trouble. Initially, there was nothing too difficult and when it came to August, about two months in, everything went dead.

I thought, ‘I can’t do this, there just isn’t enough going on’, and I started to think that I’d made a real mistake. The thing is, I hadn’t worked out that September was going to be chaos and October was going to be even worse and therefore what I needed to do was get my ducks in a row for those periods. When September came around I was paddling like crazy and for the first 12 months I had to just keep my head above water.

I very quickly identified a number of people who could help locally. I don’t fully understand why, but people in this region can be very good at hiding their working because they don’t want anybody to steal it. In this job however, nobody seems to do that to me. If there’s anything I need, people just tell me to come and see them. Everybody is helpful and so supportive of The Company as they know we won’t feed information to competitors.

I was also incredibly grateful for the enormous amount of support from the Livery companies in London.



with George Kilburn MBE (continued)

Q What's been the biggest difference between doing this job compared to being in the military?

A When I was in the military I had a pretty autonomous role but in a large organisation. Here you've got to make things work, make the decisions and there's nobody to fall back on. The Company have given me guidance and a degree of liberty which means, basically I do what I need to do and then I tell them. So far, because it's always worked, there has never been a problem. Whereas in the military there tends to be a bureaucracy and you know, unless you've got it signed

to question how we can do this, what is required, what is the best way of doing this and the best possible cost. You have to weigh up more factors.

I think this is the best job in the world to be honest because of the variety. There are 360 Freeman, all of whom are different. I've got a management board of 33. The Master Cutler, two Wardens, six Searches and 24 Assistants. With a management Board of 33, either your

About The Company of Cutlers in Hallamshire



The Cutlers' Company was established by a parliamentary Act of Incorporation in 1624.

Its purpose was initially to maintain the standards and quality of Sheffield manufactured cutlery but it has evolved over time and it's primary purpose is now to promote manufacturing and the Sheffield City Region, building on its proud heritage and highlighting quality and innovation.

There are some 360 Freeman of the Company, all of whom qualified on joining by being director or senior executive of a manufacturing organisation or work in the field of research in support of manufacturing. There are also 50 Friends of the Company who are businesses who support manufacturing or the Region and who wish to be associated with the Company. This provides a network of people involved in manufacturing and the Region who can share ideas and opportunities.

The Company maintains the profile of manufacturing in the Region through the platform of the Master Cutler and also through major events at its Hall, such as the Cutlers' Feast. Local dignitaries and people of influence from outside the Region attend these events and have the opportunity to meet real manufacturers.



The Company of
Cutlers in Hallamshire
Since 1624

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off three levels up, you actually can't move. That's one of the reasons I loved working in Africa because there really wasn't that level of bureaucracy. So, that's a fundamental change.

I think the other thing is business. If you're getting work done in the military you find out what the requirement is, you call in the contractors and you pay a lot of money to make it happen. In business you have

life is very reasonable, because you clear things through, but nobody really objects, or it's a nightmare because you're trying to satisfy 33 people.

Well, I'd say I never came close to wanting to try to satisfy 33 different people. The Master and Wardens provide guidance agreed by the Company and I implement that. If there's something I can't do, I tell them and we adapt accordingly.

Q Which part of your military career do you think is most relevant to this role, or has been the most useful?

A I think predominantly the people skills. I've found a common conception of the military is that you tell people what to do and they just do it. I discovered fairly quickly with the Yorkshire Infantry that you tell them what to do and, on occasions, they do everything in their power not to do it! You have to get them on side first. I have spent most of my life avoiding giving orders and I've preferred to work and communicate with people what we want to achieve. This way, you can reserve the orders for the times when things really do need to happen immediately.

Before moving here, I lived in Paris and New York. If you ask me where I want to live, the answer is Sheffield City Region. Why? The people, they're my people. There will always be some folk locally that I could never get on with but for the most part, they're my sort of people, so it's just great fun. Working with this small group here, where you've got a small team, all of whom are pulling in the same direction is a joy.



Q You've spent nearly 10 years as Clerk to the Company of Cutlers and you've decided that it's time to step away from the role. If you look back over the past decade, what has been the most enjoyable thing and the key piece of learning for you?

A The most enjoyable thing has probably been the relationship I've built with the Master Cutler each year. At the start of each relationship, you're somewhat apart from one another and it has been great to develop good relationships with each of them, which have continued into friendships.

me a direct order, yet when you talk to others you are polite and agreeable?". I replied "Well, Andreas, I think if I was polite to you, you wouldn't understand". In this particular instance he seemed affronted but came back 20 minutes later to say "Colonel, I think you are right".

It's really important to recognise people for their characteristics. On occasions, I've snapped at people before correcting myself because there are times when a mild amount of disapproval would suffice.

Key learning for me has been the importance of adaptability and recognising that my skills have needed to be adapted. It's important that you deal with different individuals in different ways as there are some people who benefit from a kind and softer approach and others who need to be dealt with and managed firmly. Of course, the ones who can be treated firmly tend to be really robust and don't understand if you handle things differently.

Dealing with people in different ways is something I've done for quite a long time. I recall my Operations Officer in Georgia, an outstanding German, once said to me; "Why is it when you talk to me you give

It's really important to recognise people for their characteristics. On occasions, I've snapped at people before correcting myself because there are times when a mild amount of disapproval would suffice. In the same light, there are others that unless you explain in the bluntest possible terms, they simply won't absorb the message.

Alongside adaptability, I'd say it's also crucially important to get your ducks in a row, so that in the event that something unexpected comes up, you're prepared. I've always believed in this as it was important in my military career, but it's a equally important is the different environment here.

Q Why step aside now?

A I've come to the realisation that now it's time to do other things. I've got four children, seven grandchildren and that number is growing. My wife gets to see a lot of them and I'd like to see more of them too. After 10 years, I know my character, as us military folk are all a bit the same.

After 10 years I know rather better than many others there's a danger that I forget that I'm a servant to the Company and I start to act as if I am in command. Today I serve the Master Cutler and The Company, but I cannot guarantee that this will be true in future and I never want to get to that point. Today they want to keep me, but I don't want to be leaving at a point where they want to get rid.

Q So, the transition from Military to a Livery company was successful, despite being quite a significant leap. If you were talking to someone else about making quite a big career transition, what would your advice be?

A Firstly, it's important to get your expectations sorted out, because if you move from one thing to another that's completely different with expectations of things staying the same, then you'll often be wrong.

You've got to start by having realistic expectations and then look at expanding them over time. If you'd have asked me two years into this job, I'd have said that it's strange having gone from really 'big-ticket' stuff working with the MOD and at the NATO headquarters to working within the Sheffield City Region where the impact I have on society on a day-to-day basis isn't the same. Where my work previously had an impact on a global or national stage, my focus now is on much more of a smaller, regional scale. Despite this, I recognised that the impact I have on this environment is sometimes greater and although I worked at a much higher political level in my previous experience, I prefer what I'm doing now.

You've got to start by having realistic expectations and then look at expanding them over time.

One of my children asked me: "What was the best time of your life?". They were somewhat shocked by my short response of "Now". I've always felt the present has been the best time of my life. My life has got better and better and now I'm looking at a new chapter. I hope that the next will be even better still.

What makes a good

CV?

With over seven years' experience in a research role and having recruited across a variety of salary levels and sectors, Sarah Metcalfe, Head of Research at Brewster McBride Leadership & Management Search, reflects on what makes a good CV and how it could help candidates stand out from others in the hiring process.

It is important to say to anyone reading this, that there is no set rule in how to write or update your CV. There are however, some things I would like to share, as somebody who reads hundreds of CVs every week. The points (right) will assist you when you are considering your next career move.

Having worked with candidates at all levels at one time or another, the advice I would give when writing a CV is the same no matter how many years of experience you have.

Sarah Metcalfe,
Head of Research,
Brewster McBride



The most important thing to remember is to keep it simple

- 1 Make your CV easy to read. Hiring Managers and recruiters often have hundreds of applications for one job. In order to review applications quickly, it's important that your details stand out.
- 2 Don't go crazy with time-lines, illustrations & charts and philosophical quotes. We are seeing this more and more; I know this might be a controversial issue, and I appreciate that these things can catch somebody's eye, however, in most cases this information could be better demonstrated with a simple statement.
- 3 Use bullet points to highlight key information, they also keep your statement concise and to the point.
- 4 Do not be afraid to break the 'two page rule'. When you are a senior candidate, it is expected that you will have more to say – just keep the information relevant. In this instance, three or four pages is perfectly acceptable.
- 5 Focus on the facts and figures – all roles have KPI's and a Hiring Manager who will want to see clear evidence of what you have achieved. Think about what you (and your team) have done, and how you did it for each example.

These are just a few things I would advise anyone to look at when updating their CV. At the end of the day, my job is to do the very best I can for my candidates and clients and hope the guidance above is of value to you.

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